

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

COMNAVSURFLANT

CINCUSNAVEUR

USS BARNEY

C O N F I D E N T I A L VICTORIA 0511

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, SE

SUBJECT: SEYCHELLES' "LIBERATION DAY": NAVAL PARTICIPATION

1. IN RESPONSE TO SEYCHELLES' GOVERNMENT REQUEST, UK, FRANCE, USSR, INDIA AND U.S. SENT TOTAL OF EIGHT NAVAL UNITS TO PARTICIPATE IN FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF JUNE 5, 1977 COUP D'ETAT. AUSTRALIA PROVIDED RAAF P-3 AIRCRAFT WHICH PERFORMED LOW-LEVEL FLY-PAST AT CONCLUSION OF STADIUM CEREMONIES. BOTH INDIA AND SOVIETS HAD FLAG OFFICERS EMBARKED FOR OCCASION AND SOVIET VICE ADMIRAL YASAKOV, WHO VISITED SEYCHELLES LAST NOVEMBER FOR 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION, WAS SENIOR OFFICER PRESENT.

2. FROM OUTSET, SOVIETS APPEARED TO DO THEIR UTMOST TO WEAR OUT THEIR WELCOME. IN TURN THEY (A) INCONVENIENCED GOS MINISTER REGARDING TIMING OF COURTESY CALL, (B) IRRITATED PORT OFFICIALS BY TAKING UNASSIGNED ANCHORAGE (THEREBY FORCING OTHER SHIPS TO MOVE), AND PUTTING STEADY PRESSURE ON FOR PIERSIDE BERTH, (C) FURNISHED FIREWORKS WHICH WOULD MAKE SMALL TOWN JULY 4 DISPLAY IN U.S. SEEM LIKE A CECIL B. DE MILLE PRODUCTION.
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ACCORDING PORT OFFICIAL, VERY FEW SEYCHELLOIS TURNED UP FOR GUIDED TOUR OF STROGY, A KASHIN-CLASS DESTROYER. AS WITH PAST VISITS, HIGHLY INDIVIDUALISTIC SEYCHELLOIS WERE IN-CREDULOUS AT SIGHT OF REGIMENTATED SOVIET CREW MEMBERS BEING LED ABOUT TOWN BY OFFICERS AND NCO'S. FINALLY, SOVIET AMBASSADOR STARTSEV AND YASAKOV UPSET ARRANGEMENTS WORKED OUT BETWEEN GOS AND DEAN OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS FOR ONE WREATH TO BE LAID AT

LIBERATION MONUMENT ON BEHALF OF CORPS. THROUGH HEAVY-HANDED PERSERVERANCE, SOVIETS SUCCEEDED IN PLACING TWO WREATHS AT MONUMENT (WITH PRC EMBASSY RELUCTANTLY FOLLOWING SUIT), BUT GOVERNMENT MEDIA, IN OBVIOUS REACTION OF DISPLEASURE, POINTEDLY OMITTED SOVIET AND PRC EMBASSY MOVES IN REPORTING EVENT.

3. IN EMBASSY VIEW, PROPERLY KEYED VISIT OF USS BARNEY (DDG-6) PROVIDED SHARP CONTRAST TO COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE SOVIET PARTICIPATION. ROCK BAND FROM BARNEY, IN STADIUM CONCERT JUNE 8, PLAYED BEFORE 4-5 THOUSAND ENTHUSIASTIC SEYCHELLOIS AND CREW MEMBERS GAVE RECORD BLOOD DONATION. COMPREHENSIVE SPORTS PROGRAM ALSO SERVED TO ESTABLISH GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUNG SEYCHELLOIS. DEPORTMENT ASHORE WAS EXEMPLARY THROUGHOUT VISIT. EMBASSY APPRECIATES EFFORTS OF COMMANDER MC NICHOLAS, HIS OFFICERS AND MEN IN REPRESENTING U.S.G. AND USN INTERESTS ON AN IMPORTANT OCCASION. ABSENCE OF USN UNIT WOULD HAVE BEEN VERY UNFORTUNATE, AND EMBASSY WISHES TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO ALSO EXPRESS ITS APPRECIATION TO RADM PACKER AND OTHER USN COMMANDS FOR MODIFYING DEPLOYMENT SCHEDULE TO ALLOW FOR BARNEY PARTICIPATION IN RESPONSE TO PRESIDENTIAL REQUEST.
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